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ABSTRACT

This publication presents recommendations for improving educational success, excellence, and equity for Hispanic American students in Minnesota's public schools. The document describes the actions that established the Minnesota State Board of Education Hispanic Learner Task Force (HLTF), the procedures for developing the recommendations, and demographic information on Hispanic Americans in Minnesota. The HLTF's research consisted primarily of surveys of and interviews with parents, community representatives, students, and school staff. The findings and recommendations of the HLTF cover state policy and local districts. These recommendations call for improved communications, including an interagency clearinghouse and resource center, and improved parent-school communications; bilingual and bicultural early childhood education and family education; improved cultural sensitivity and school climate through staff development and school-wide events; Parent Advisory Councils in districts with funding for language programs; curriculum, instruction, and assessment improvement for equal access; teacher to pupil ratios of 1:25 for schools with Hispanic American students; staff development opportunities to learn about second-language acquisition and cultural awareness; and programs for community and adult education offering language services and job assistance. Appendixes provide the four surveys used and a glossary of six terms. (JB)

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MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

REPORT OF THE HISPANIC LEARNER TASK FORCE

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Statement from the Task Force Members

The Hispanic Learner Task Force members wish to express their gratitude to the State Board of Education for the opportunity to work on this important project for the Hispanic population in Minnesota. We also want the State Board of Education to know that we are concerned about what will be done with this report. The Hispanic Learner Task Force project has raised our expectations and the expectations of the Hispanic community that actions will be taken by the Board, the Legislature, and school districts which will focus on the unique educational needs of Hispanic learners. We hope that our work will assist in determining policy and in allocating resources to implement or expand programs that will help meet those needs. Serious regard by the State Board of Education for the content of this report is important as a matter of trust in the educational system and our own credibility in the eyes of the Hispanic community we represent.

MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
HISPANIC LEARNER TASK FORCE

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Summary of Task Force Recommendations

The Minnesota State Board of Education and the Minnesota Department of Education are committed to educational success, excellence, and equity for all learners. Both believe that all students can learn, that success breeds success, and that schools create and affect the conditions for success. The state and local policy recommendations contained in this report focus on improving education for Hispanic students in Minnesota's public schools. The categories listed in each policy section correspond to those in the findings section of this report (pages 13-23).

State Policy Recommendations:

The Minnesota State Board of Education should:

1. Communication

a. Establish a state-level, interagency clearinghouse and resource center to provide information and resources for staff, students, and parent development in the areas of Spanish language and Hispanic cultures and values.

b. Lobby the Legislature to charge a new or existing, adequately funded community agency, outside of local school districts, to inform Hispanics about available educational services and rights and responsibilities.

c. Design a monitoring process to ensure that recommendations from the Hispanic Learner Task Force are acted upon.

d. Require reports in each of the next three (3) years on how the recommendations from the Hispanic Learner Task Force have been implemented at the State Board and local level.

2. Early Childhood and Family Education

a. Lobby the Legislature to require school districts which levy for community education and which have Hispanic residents to implement bilingual-bicultural early childhood and family education programs for the specific needs of Hispanic families.

b. Mandate state monitoring of bilingual-bicultural programs to ensure that they meet the specific needs of Hispanic learners.

3. Cultural Sensitivity and School Climate

a. Lobby the Legislature to provide funding for broader implementation of staff development related to understanding of Spanish language and Hispanic cultures and values.

b. Work with the Board of Teaching to add a K-12 cultural diversity licensure requirement which focuses on methodology and pedagogy for teaching various ethnic groups.

4. Parent Involvement

a. Require school districts which receive bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) funding to form representative Parent Advisory Councils.

5. Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment

a. Implement or expand bilingual education programs K-12 to ensure equal access to the curriculum and to prevent educational deficits.

6. Staffing

a. Lobby the Legislature to set a maximum teacher-pupil ratio of 1:25 for ESL and bilingual programs and to provide additional funding to ensure compliance with this ratio.

b. Encourage recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified bilingual-bicultural Hispanic staff in all personnel classifications in local districts, especially administrators, teachers, including ESL and bilingual education teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals, social workers.

c. Work with the Board of Teaching to establish more ESL and bilingual certification programs at colleges and universities throughout the state.

d. Work with the Board of Teaching to simplify the process of adding ESL and bilingual endorsements to existing teacher licensure areas.

e. Work with the Higher Education Coordinating Board to provide incentives to colleges and universities to recruit Hispanics to become teachers and to encourage preservice and licensed teachers to become bilingual in Spanish and English.

f. Mandate annual reports of districts' ESL and bilingual staffing ratios established by the Minnesota Department of Education.

7. Staff Development

a. Establish a training section in the Minnesota Department of Education for technical assistance to districts with an emphasis on Spanish language and Hispanic cultures and values.

b. Lobby the Legislature to provide funding for fuller implementation of staff development related to understanding of Spanish language and Hispanic cultures and values.

8. Community and Adult Education

a. Mandate community education programs to include both Spanish literacy and English instruction in districts which have Spanish-speaking residents.

b. Require that General Education Diploma (GED) testing be done in the native language of the adult and that community centers be added to the GED test sites.

Local District Recommendations:

Local school districts should:

1. Communication

a. Ensure that all written communications between school and home are in Spanish and English in every school that has Hispanic students.

b. Recruit, hire, and train a pool of bilingual-bicultural interpreters and translators for educational assessments and school conferences.

c. Require bilingual-bicultural, school-community liaison staff in every school that has Hispanic students.

2. Early Childhood and Family Education

a. Implement bilingual-bicultural early childhood and family education programs for the specific needs of Hispanic families.

3. Cultural Sensitivity and School Climate

a. Structure ongoing, school-wide training for awareness and sensitivity of Spanish language and Hispanic cultures and values.

b. Plan and support school-wide events and instructional activities that promote cross-cultural understanding and decrease racial hostility and discrimination for all students, especially at the middle school-junior high level.

c. Increase recognition of the achievements of Hispanic students enrolled in ESL and bilingual education programs.

4. Parent Involvement

a. Provide on-site, bilingual-bicultural, community-school liaison staff to assist parents.

b. Collaborate with community agencies to provide or arrange for transportation and child care for Hispanic students and families so they can attend school-related activities.

c. Develop information networks within the community to help Hispanic parents gain access to educational systems.

5. Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment

a. Implement or expand K-12 bilingual education programs to ensure equal access to the curriculum and to prevent educational deficits.

b. Include Hispanic perspectives in the curriculum.

c. Implement strategies that maximize Hispanic ESL students' learning in English-only classes.

d. Encourage greater representation of Hispanic students in academically advanced programs.

e. Establish placement teams and processes to determine individualized service levels for ESL and bilingual education students.

6. Staffing

a. Provide bilingual-bicultural paraprofessionals at a ratio of 1:25 in schools with Hispanic students.

b. Encourage recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified bilingual-bicultural Hispanic staff in all personnel classifications in local districts, especially administrators, teachers, including ESL and bilingual education teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals, social workers.

7. Staff Development

a. Provide opportunities for staff to learn about second-language acquisition, Spanish language, and Hispanic cultures and values.

8. Community and Adult Education

a. Provide all services and communication (translators, interpreters, and newsletters) in English and Spanish in districts that have Hispanic residents.

b. Assist community-based education programs to further develop job skills and financial management training for Hispanics.

c. Provide classes on parenting skills, self-esteem, school policies, and self-advocacy.

d. Provide post-secondary educational and career counseling for Hispanic learners.

MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
HISPANIC LEARNER TASK FORCE REPORT

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Minnesota State Board of Education with a set of recommendations to improve the educational success, excellence, and equity for Hispanic students in Minnesota's public schools.

Background of the Task Force

In December 1986, the Minnesota State Board of Education appointed a curriculum task force to address educational issues of Black learners in the state. In March 1991, the State Board commissioned both the Hispanic and Asian-Pacific Learner Task Forces to investigate and report on the educational concerns of their respective learner groups in the state. The authorization for the Hispanic Learner Task Force specified that it have statewide representation; include parents, educators, and community representatives; and balance urban, suburban, and non-metropolitan areas of the state.

The Hispanic Learner Task Force had four charges:

1. Assess State Board of Education rules and initiatives and make appropriate recommendations.

2. Assess the concerns of Hispanic staff and students in public schools, parents, and community representatives.

3. Develop short- and long-term recommendations to address the needs of Hispanic learners.

4. Submit a written report to the State Board of Education by March 1992.

Procedures

During 1991-1992, the task force conducted organizational, visitation, and report writing meetings. The March, April, May, June, and August meetings focused on task force organization, review of background resources, policy and curriculum rule

analysis, and questionnaire development. In September and October, members visited Willmar, Minneapolis, Madelia, and St. Paul to interview educators, and Hispanic students, parents, and community representatives. The task force gratefully acknowledges the open and willing participation of people at all four sites. Data from similar interviews conducted in Moorhead in 1990 by the Migrant Issues Project were also considered. The November, December, and January meetings were devoted to writing the final report to the State Board of Education.

Introduction

Background

The State Board of Education and the Minnesota Department of Education are committed to the philosophy that all children can learn and be successful in our educational system. The Hispanic Learner Task Force was established to articulate the unique needs of Hispanic learners to the State Board of Education. Two major accomplishments are needed to maximize the opportunities for the success of Hispanic learners: (1) ensure access to the curriculum and (2) facilitate the educational process by removing language and cultural barriers. "There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (US Supreme Court, 1974, Lau v. Nichols).

Legal precedents, research, and the conclusions of this task force all support the fact that there are many unmet needs of the Hispanic learners. This task force has focused on the following major areas of educational need:

- Communication
- Early Childhood and Family Education
- Cultural Sensitivity and School Climate
- Parent Involvement
- Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment
- Staffing
- Staff Development
- Community and Adult Education

Although many Hispanic learners share the Spanish language along with other cultural traditions, there is also a wide variety of racial and ethnic heritage within the Hispanic population. This diversity underscores how critical it is for schools to pay attention to the unique needs of Hispanic learners. Schools can encounter the challenge of having to provide a range of programs that address: (1) the extreme

needs of learners who are unable to achieve academically in either English or Spanish; (2) the needs of students who are able to speak English but lack literacy skills; and (3) the needs of Hispanic learners who are academically successful and who will benefit from cultural enrichment and gifted and talented programs.

Demographic research documents dramatic growth in the U.S. Hispanic population. It is expected that by the year 2000 "there will be an increase of 2.4 million Hispanic children" (*Hispanic Education: A Statistical Portrait*, National Council of La Raza, 1990). One of the greatest growth areas is in a population that is not now being adequately served by our educational system.

The Hispanic Learner Task Force concurs with the challenge put forth in the 1990 report *Education That Works: An Action Plan for the Education of Minorities* by the Quality Education Minorities Projects Action Council. It states:

> "The task before us is clear. America must put an end to the educational neglect of our children, because ending that neglect is part of the answer to America's larger problems. The road to the future must be paved with the achievement of our students. As a new century opens, we must all reclaim the distinctively American promise so well articulated half a century ago by Franklin D. Roosevelt: 'We seek to build an America where no one is left out.' And we must do so not only because it is right, though that is reason enough, but because the future well-being of the nation--non-minority and minority--has placed that task so unmistakably before us" (p. 16).

Minnesota's Hispanic Learners

There is no single definition of Hispanic learners. They vary in racial and ethnic heritage. They may hail from the United States or 24 other countries. Their dominant language may be Spanish or English. Their names may or may not sound or look Hispanic. They may be new arrivals to Minnesota or they may have relatives who settled in Minnesota in the 19th century.

However they are defined, their numbers are increasing. If current birth and immigration rates continue, Hispanic children will comprise about 13 percent of the total U.S. school-age population by the year 2000 (*Education Daily*, Vol. 24, No. 154). In Minnesota public schools, the total PK-12 enrollment for 1974-75 was 4,731 or 3.4%. By 1990-91, the total increased to 9,907 or 9.7% (*Minnesota Education Overview*, 1991, p. 22).

Educational Issues

Major educational issues for Hispanic learners in Minnesota include (1) curriculum access that is limited due to language barriers, (2) high dropout rates, and (3) maintaining cultural identity.

•Curriculum Access
Placement of Hispanic students who are not fluent in English in English-only classes denies them access to learning. This situation results in gaps and deficiencies in their knowledge and skills. It is difficult for these students to overcome the gaps, and too many continue to achieve at below average levels and to fall further behind. A fair and equitable educational program for Hispanic learners who are learning English includes both ESL and native language instruction components.

• Dropout Rate: Lack of academic success contributes to the high dropout percentage rate for Hispanic learners which has increased from 5% in 1980 to 9.9% in 1990. That percentage increase is the highest for any racial/ethnic group in the state (*Minnesota Education Overview*, 1991, p. 29). According to 1987 figures, the percentage of 9th grade Hispanic students who graduated from public high schools 4 years later is 73%, compared to 91% for white students and 88% for all racial/ethnic groups (Minnesota Department of Education).

•Cultural Identity: Many Hispanic learners, as members of a minority culture, face cultural identity and self-esteem issues. This includes "balancing the desire to maintain a traditional language (which reinforces cultural heritage) against the need to adopt a new language for better communication with the majority group; different cultural norms from the majority culture; and different emphases placed on concepts of self and family" (*Hispanics in the East Metro Area*, 1989, p. 21).

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Communication

Our investigation shows that communication is a primary concern of Hispanic parents and students and of school employees. Parents, students, and school staff need more written and verbal information in both Spanish and English between school and home. Attention needs to be focused on information about how the educational system works, expectations of the system, policies, meeting notices and other general information. This is especially important for Hispanic families who are new to a district.

Inadequate communication has led to situations in which Hispanic parents did not know when school meetings were scheduled. They were unaware of their children's truancy or their progress. In some cases, Hispanic students have not participated in extracurricular activities because notices were given only in English. School staff share the concern that messages and information about students and school activities or policies may not be received or clearly understood. All groups stated difficulty in funding, finding, and training interpreters and translators. This is especially true in districts outside the larger population centers in Minnesota.

Recommendations for the State Board of Education:

- Establish a state-level, interagency clearinghouse and resource center to provide information and resources for staff, student, and parent development in the areas of Spanish language and Hispanic cultures and values.

- Lobby the Legislature to charge a new or existing, adequately funded community agency, outside of local school districts, with the responsibility of informing Hispanics about educational services available and rights and responsibilities.

- Design a monitoring process to ensure that recommendations from the Hispanic Learner Task Force are acted upon.

- Require reports in each of the next three (3) years on how the recommendations from the Hispanic Learner Task Force have been implemented at the State Board and local level.

Recommendations for School Districts:

- Ensure that all written communications between school and home are in Spanish and English in every school that has Hispanic students.

- Recruit, hire, and train a pool of bilingual-bicultural interpreters and translators for educational assessments and school conferences.

- Require bilingual-bicultural, school-community liaison staff in every school that has Hispanic students.

2. Early Childhood and Family Education

Early childhood and family education (ECFE) will benefit Spanish-dominant Hispanic students and their families if its programs use a maintenance bilingual education model in which students develop language skills, literacy, and knowledge in both English and Spanish. It is extremely important that the instruction be primarily in the learners' native language because this lessens the trauma of transition to a second language. Further, it gives non-English-speaking children a sense of acceptance. Without native language instruction, students may develop low self-esteem. They may not have an intrinsic valuing of their native language and culture. They may not fully develop self-identity within their families, their community, and the larger society. ECFE programs need to be carefully monitored to ensure that the teachers are fluent Spanish speakers.

Recommendations for the State Board of Education:

- Lobby the Legislature to require school districts which levy for community education and which have Hispanic residents to implement bilingual-bicultural early childhood and family education programs for the specific needs of Hispanic families.

- Mandate state monitoring of bilingual-bicultural programs to ensure that they meet the specific needs of Hispanic learners.

Recommendation for School Districts:

- Implement bilingual-bicultural early childhood and family education programs for the specific needs of Hispanic families.

3. Cultural Sensitivity and School Climate

Our investigation shows that many Hispanic learners have a sense of low self-esteem and alienation within the school community. Issues such as poverty, lack of adequate parent support, lack of respect and understanding by school district staff, and negative perceptions and stereotypes placed on them by staff and other students contribute a great deal to the difficulty many have in achieving academically and in developing a positive self-image.

Many students interviewed during this study believe that discrimination increases as they move through the grades. Elementary-age students seem to be more accepting and more inclusive in their relations with each other. This changes significantly when learners reach middle school-junior high age. It has been widely documented that self-identity concerns intensify in the early adolescent years. For Hispanic learners, who live in two cultures and are often subjected to discrimination and rejection due language, cultural, and racial differences, the struggle for self-esteem is difficult.

Recommendations for the State Board of Education:

- Lobby the Legislature to provide funding for broader implementation of staff development related to understanding of Spanish language and Hispanic cultures and values.

- Work with the Board of Teaching to add a K-12 cultural diversity licensure requirement which focuses on methodology and pedagogy for teaching various ethnic groups.

Recommendations for School Districts:

- Structure ongoing, school-wide training for awareness and sensitivity of Spanish language and Hispanic cultures and values.

- Plan and support school-wide events and instructional activities that promote cross-cultural understanding and decrease racial hostility and discrimination for all students, especially at the middle school-junior high level.

- Increase recognition of the achievements of Hispanic students enrolled in ESL and bilingual education programs.

4. Parent Involvement

Our investigation shows that Hispanic parents and school staff recognize barriers that prevent many parents from participating in their children's education. In addition to any communication gap which may exist due to language differences, many parents lack understanding of the educational system, such as attendance policies, expectations for parent-school responsibilities, and grading policies. They may not have the resources (financial, transportation, child care, telephone) to participate easily in the schools. They may not feel welcomed or encouraged by school personnel to participate.

Different cultural backgrounds influence Hispanic parents' perceptions of the roles they play in their children's education. Traditionally, Hispanics do not challenge institutions such as schools, churches, and government. Many have a strong belief that schools exist to educate their children and they trust the institutions to accomplish this without their participation.

Recommendation for the State Board of Education:

- Require school districts which receive bilingual and ESL funding to form representative Parent Advisory Councils.

Recommendations for School Districts:

- Provide on-site, bilingual-bicultural community-school liaison staff to assist parents.

- Collaborate with community agencies to provide or arrange for transportation and child care for Hispanic students and families so they can attend school-related activities.

- Develop information networks within the community to help Hispanic parents gain access to educational systems.

5. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Our investigation shows that many school staff are often disappointed in the low achievement levels of Hispanic students. Many Hispanic parents and students share the same disappointments and find the academic curriculum difficult and the teaching methodology and assessment measures inappropriate because of language and cultural differences.

Parents and students often expressed frustration with the following:

a. grading and promotional practices which pass students from one grade to another without adequate achievement and learning;

b. overrepresentation in special education classes and lower-level courses or instructional groups;

c. underrepresentation in enrichment and gifted-talented classes;

d. academic, language, and ability assessments which place students in inappropriate instructional settings, such as placement in English-only classes when students' comprehension and language skills do not match the level of the content;

e. nearly exclusive focus on Western/European perspectives in content areas;

f. use of Hispanic students as in-class translators for others whose English is more limited;

g. ESL models that address English language development (vocabulary and language structure), but not concepts, knowledge, and skills related to content areas that are addressed in bilingual education models;

h. assumption by school staff that a student's verbal fluency in English means equal ability in reading and writing.

School staff repeatedly raised these concerns:

a. the negative impact of high mobility and absenteeism of some Hispanic learners on both the learners themselves and on the school system;

b. slow or incomplete transfer of educational records from other states;

c. lack of adequate and appropriate instructional materials in regular, ESL, and bilingual classes;

d. lack of Spanish-speaking school counselors;

e. the financial, social, and academic stress that an influx of Hispanic learners places on a school system;

f. academic, language, and ability assessments which place students in inappropriate instructional settings;

g. need for more or different funding earmarked for the education of Hispanic learners.

Recommendation for the State Board of Education:

•Implement or expand bilingual education programs K -12 to ensure equal access to the curriculum and to prevent educational deficits.

Recommendations for School Districts:

•Implement or expand K-12 bilingual education programs to ensure equal access to the curriculum and prevent educational deficits.

•Include Hispanic perspectives in the curriculum.

•Implement strategies that maximize Hispanic ESL students' learning in English-only classes.

•Encourage greater representation of Hispanic students in academically advanced programs.

•Establish placement teams and processes to determine individualized service levels for ESL and bilingual education students.

6. Staffing

Two major concerns were frequently cited about staffing: Lack of role models and unsatisfactory teacher-pupil ratios. Our investigation shows that many Hispanic parents and students, and many school staff, whether Hispanic or not, believe there is inadequate personnel--both in background and numbers-- to serve the needs of Hispanic learners. There are too few bilingual and bicultural staff across personnel classifications to provide a variety of Hispanic role models. Recruiting and retaining Hispanic and other minority teachers continues to be a problem in Minnesota and across the United States. James Banks, professor at the University of Washington in Seattle says, "If current trends continue, the percentage of minority teachers in schools will have decreased from 12.5% in 1980 to less than 5% by the year 2000" (*Education Daily*, Vol. 24, No. 154, p. 2).

School staff and parents state that many existing ESL and bilingual education programs, as well as St. Paul's Consent Decree, are staffed inadequately. Many districts are staffing far over the state-funded ratio of 45 students to 1 ESL or bilingual teacher. We found specific cases of ESL teachers assigned to between 65-90 students. Teaching and learning are difficult under these circumstances. There was also a clear statement of need for fluent Spanish-speaking teachers in special education and gifted and talented classes in districts that have Spanish-dominant learners.

Our interviews revealed that Hispanic paraprofessionals not only have classroom "case loads" similar to ESL and bilingual teachers, but also take on a multitude of other responsibilities. These typically include composing and translating messages and announcements, providing information on Hispanic culture to other school staff, serving as interpreters for phone calls and conferences. If the school's counselors and social workers do not speak Spanish, Hispanic paraprofessionals often become translators for them as well.

Recommendations for the State Board of Education:

- Lobby the Legislature to set a maximum pupil-teacher ratio of 1:25 for ESL and bilingual programs and to provide additional funding to ensure compliance with this ratio.

- Encourage recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified bilingual-bicultural Hispanic staff in all personnel classifications in local districts, especially administrators, teachers, including ESL and bilingual education teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals, social workers.

•Work with the Board of Teaching to establish more ESL and bilingual certification programs at colleges and universities throughout the state.

•Work with the Board of Teaching to simplify the process of adding ESL and bilingual endorsements to existing teacher licensure areas.

•Work with the Higher Education Coordinating Board to provide incentives to colleges and universities to recruit Hispanics to become teachers and to encourage preservice and licensed teachers to become bilingual in Spanish and English.

•Mandate annual reports of districts' ESL and bilingual staffing ratios established by the Minnesota Department of Education.

Recommendations for School Districts:

•Provide bilingual-bicultural paraprofessionals at a ratio of 1:25 in schools with Hispanic students.

•Encourage recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified bilingual-bicultural Hispanic staff in all personnel classifications in local districts, especially administrators, teachers, including ESL and bilingual education teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals, social workers.

7. Staff Development

Our investigation shows that many Hispanic parents and students experience discrimination in school settings. They believe that many non-Hispanic school personnel lack understanding of and sensitivity to Spanish language and Hispanic cultures and values. This means that school staff may not understand, accept, and respect Hispanic learners. Many school staff acknowledged their lack of background, training, and experience in working with Hispanic learners; they also expressed a desire for information and training.

The Inclusive Educational Program Rule (Minnesota Rules, Part 3500.0550) adopted by the Minnesota State Board of Education in 1988 requires every Minnesota public school district to establish and maintain an inclusive educational program. Focused on curriculum development, the rule can also be impetus for staff development about Hispanic language, cultures, values, and contributions. Teacher preparation, teacher licensure, and continuing education also have roles to play in helping school staff increase their knowledge and skills in educating Hispanic learners.

Recommendations for the State Board of Education:

- Establish a training section in the Minnesota Department of Education for technical assistance to districts with an emphasis on Spanish language and Hispanic cultures and values.

- Lobby the Legislature to provide funding for fuller implementation of staff development related to understanding of Spanish language and Hispanic culture and values.

Recommendation for School Districts:

- Provide opportunities for staff to learn about second-language acquisition, Spanish language, and Hispanic cultures and values.

8. Community and Adult Education

Parents, students, and community representatives stated the importance of community education programs in serving Hispanic adult learners, especially those who are recent arrivals to Minnesota or who may not speak English well. Community education programs can help these adult learners compete in the labor force, rise educationally, and enjoy full participation as citizens. Our investigation indicates a pressing need to strengthen current community education programs in the areas of communication, family management, parenting skills, adult basic education and ESL classes. Hispanic parents and community representatives often requested that courses and programs such as those mentioned above be taught in Spanish. They also suggested that community education staff and the community-based organizations which represent Hispanic families work together to plan course and program offerings.

Recommendations for the State Board of Education:

- Mandate community education programs to include both Spanish literacy and English instruction when there are Spanish-speaking Hispanic residents in a district.

- Require that General Education Diploma (GED) testing be done in the native language of the adult and that community centers be added to the GED test sites.

Recommendations for School Districts:

- Provide all services and communication (translators, interpreters, and newsletters) in English and Spanish in districts that have Hispanic families.

- Provide community-based education programs to further develop job skills and financial management training for Hispanics.

- Provide classes on parenting skills, self-esteem, school policies, and self-advocacy.

- Provide post-secondary educational and career counseling for Hispanic adult learners.

Conclusion

> "Children must feel that they are truly valued and that they can achieve academic success. This includes the valuing of their culture and language and the appreciation of their individual talents, an essential ingredient for heightened self-esteem" (*Education That Works: An Action Plan for the Education of Minorities,* 1990, p. 22).

In order to accomplish this for Hispanic learners in Minnesota, it is necessary that adequate financial, human, and time resources are provided to address their unique educational needs. Overall, strengthened financial and philosophical commitments are needed at both the state and local level.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1a

Hispanic Learner Task Force
Minnesota State Board of Education
1991

QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

1. What do you want the State Board of Education to know about your child's education?

2. What successes and difficulties has your child experienced in school?

3. What are your opinions and/or concerns or both about areas such as:

   a. Classes and courses?

   b. Grades?

   c. Bilingual education?

   d. Counseling?

   e. Communication between home and school?

   f. Attitude and treatment of Hispanic students by the school employees?

   g. Community education for adults?

4. What can be done to improve education for Hispanic students?

Hispanic Learner Task Force
Minnesota State Board of Education
1991

QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

1. What do you want the State Board of Education to know about the needs of Hispanic children?

2. What successes and difficulties have Hispanic learners experienced in school?

3. What are your opinions and/or concerns about areas such as:

   a. Classes and courses?

   b. Grades?

   c. Bilingual education?

   d. Counseling?

   e. Communication between home and school?

   f. Attitude and treatment of Hispanic students by the school employees?

   g. Community education for adults?

4. What can be done to improve education for Hispanic students?

Hispanic Learner Task Force
Minnesota State Board of Education
1991

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. What do you want the State Board of Education to know about your education?

2. What successes and difficulties have you experienced in school?

3. What are your opinions and/or concerns about areas such as:

   a. Classes and courses?

   b. Grades?

   c. Bilingual education?

   d. Counseling?

   e. Communication between home and school?

   f. Attitude and treatment of Hispanic students by the school employees?

   g. Community education for adults?

4. What can be done to improve education for Hispanic students?

Hispanic Learner Task Force
Minnesota State Board of Education
1991

QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL STAFF

1. What do you want the State Board of Education to know about the education of Hispanic learners in your school/district?

2. What successes and difficulties have Hispanic learners experienced in your school/district?

3. What are your opinions and/or concerns about areas such as:

   a. Classes and courses?

   b. Grades?

   c. Bilingual education?

   d. Counseling?

   e. Communication between home and school?

   f. Attitude and treatment of Hispanic students by the school employees?

   g. Community education for adults?

4. What can be done to improve education for Hispanic students?

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Bilingual: Proficient in two languages.

Bilingual-Bicultural: (1) People who are proficient in two languages and who understand the culture associated with each language. (2) Bilingual programs which emphasize aspects of the native culture of the learners.

Bilingual Education: Refers to some configuration of instruction through two languages. This generally means teaching skills in English and another language and teaching content through the two languages. There are two types of bilingual education programs, maintenance and transitional. The transitional approach emphasizes the student's linguistic transition from the native language to the target or second language. The maintenance approach maintains the student's native language along with learning English. In Minnesota, the transitional approach is the most common of the two.

Consent Decree: A legal stipulation for the St. Paul Public School District No. 625 designed to insure that all Latino students in the district receive systematic development of skills in order to bring them to the expected educational performance level. This includes an assessment of Spanish language proficiency and current education needs as well as an individual development plan for each student.

English as a Second Language (ESL): Instruction for teaching English language skills (speaking, reading, writing,) to those who have another native language.

Spanish-dominant: Refers to people who speak Spanish as their native language and who usually have limited proficiency in English.

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